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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 9272
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 3035
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 9714
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0729
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 004035

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CASC](#) [ASEC](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: INDONESIA: MORE ABEPURA AFTERMATH

REF: A. JAKARTA 3464 (TENSION HIGH IN ABEPURA)

- [1](#)B. JAKARTA 3690 (FREEPORT SEES LOOSE-KNIT GROUP BEHIND PAPUA PROTESTS)
- [1](#)C. JAKARTA 3246 (LIKELY WINNERS)
- [1](#)D. JAKARTA 3160 (ELECTIONS LIKELY TO SEAL PARTITION)

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Classified By: Ambassador B. Lynn Pascoe, Reason: 1.4 (b & d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. While Papuan provincial authorities deal with the aftermath of the March 16 Abepura riot, senior GOI figures hint that foreign interests and Jakarta politicians had a hand in the disturbance. An important group of Papuan political and religious leaders wrote President Yudhoyono complaining about the GOI response to the debacle, saying that SBY,s professed commitment to dialogue with Papuans appears hollow. A well-placed GOI figure conceded to the Ambassador that not all the Cabinet supports SBY,s approach to Papua; this creates problems. End summary.

Investigation Ongoing

[1](#)2. (SBU) Police in Papua, augmented by experts from national police headquarters, continue their inquiry into the Abepura riot that claimed five lives (ref A). Three policemen and an air force sergeant died during the riot, and a fourth policeman reportedly died later from his injuries. National Police Chief General Susanto replaced the head of Jayapura,s mobile brigade (riot control) unit two days after the riot. An unknown number of civilians suffered injury during the disturbance; the Catholic Peace and Justice Secretariat reports three persons hospitalized by stray Brimob bullets fired during the hunt for suspects.

[1](#)3. (SBU) As of March 25, police had seventeen suspects in custody and sought twelve more. Police report a total of 76 persons interviewed in the investigation. Members of some suspects, families have requested help from the National Committee on Human Rights (Komnasham) in facilitating access to detainees. The police told reporters that the prisoners have legal counsel provided by well-known legal aid NGOs. The police have implicated a number of organizations in the violence, including the West Papua Referendum Front, whose leader Selfius Bobi has gone to ground, and the People,s Fighting Front led by Arnold Omba.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Cendrawasih University, near the riot,s epicenter, remained closed last week, and the media reports that over 1,000 students fled the campus following the police,s sweeping of dormitories in search of suspects. (Note:

students at Cendrawasih tend to live in dormitories organized along tribal and geographic lines). Papua police chief Tommy Yakobus has urged the students to return, saying he guaranteed their security. Repairs on 18 dormitories damaged during the searches began on March 24.

Blame Game Begins

15. (SBU) Meanwhile, GOI officials began speculating who provoked the March 16 riot. On March 20, Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono speculated that local NGOs with foreign connections had organized the incident. He claimed that the attack appeared planned, not spontaneous. The groups, Sudarsono conjectured, sought to provoke human rights violations that would serve as a pretext for international intervention. Drawing a comparison to a 1991 massacre in East Timor that sparked international outrage, Sudarsono said a conspiracy to stage a Santa Cruz II might exist.

17. (SBU) Syamsir Siregar, the head of the National Intelligence Agency (BIN) espoused the same theory following last Monday's Cabinet meeting. NGOs sponsored it. We know that they are local NGOs, but they have foreign connections.8 Siregar also hinted that former People's Consultative Assembly speaker and 2004 presidential candidate Amien Rais might have links to the riot. When asked by journalists whether members of the political elite8 had stoked the disturbance, Siregar said that he did not yet know, but they had made provocative statements.8 When pressed to give names, he declined, saying You know already.8 When journalists persisted, mentioning Rais by name, Siregar responded teasingly, You know already.8

Papuan Leaders Irrate

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18. (SBU) The central government's reaction to the incident angered many Papuan leaders, exacerbating the frustration they had expressed over Jakarta's decision to hold elections in West Irian Jaya (refs C and D). In a March 20 open letter to President Yudhoyono, nearly the entire political and religious leadership of Papua complained about the behavior of the delegation led by Coordinating Minister for Security, Political and Legal Affairs Widodo during its March 17 post-riot mission to Jayapura.

19. (SBU) In the letter, the leaders complained that the delegation ignored requests for a meeting, and described the visit as hasty and primarily concerned with conveying condolences to the bereaved of the military and police killed. The delegation's conduct, the letter said, conveyed the impression that the GOI did not have a serious approach to Papua, and that the President's oft-declared openness for dialogue with Papuans consisted of mere words, since he had not pursued dialogue in any meaningful form. It urged the President to resolve the Papua problem on the basis of dialogue and negotiation as in Aceh, and to replace those Cabinet ministers who do not share the President's vision and mission8 for Papua. The list of signatories consisted of two vice-chairmen of the Papuan Provincial Parliament, Komarudin Watabun and Enyop Koyoga; the leadership of the Papuan People's Council; and the leaders of Papua's Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu communities.

110. (C/NF) In a March 24 meeting, Presidential adviser T.B. Silalahi, who had responsibility for Papua as a Cabinet member under Suharto, told the Ambassador that events in Abepura had almost nothing to do with Freeport, which "was only a pretext". Home Affairs Minister Mohammad Ma'aruf, out of step with Yudhoyono's approach, largely bore the blame for the mess. Ma'aruf had failed to heed warnings that holding elections in West Irian Jaya would create problems, Silalahi said. SBY, Silalahi continued, had

instructed Ma,aruf to hold a real dialogue with the leaders of the Papuan People,s Council, but Ma,aruf did not take them seriously. The Ambassador urged that the GOI develop a coherent Papua policy with sufficiently dramatic goals to give the population hope for early change.

Comment

¶11. (C) The local authorities in Jayapura might restore security and apprehend the culprits in the wake of the March 16 riot, but these events have plainly aggravated Papuan leaders, distrust and anger over the central government,s approach to Papua. SBY,s policy of a political settlement in Papua based on good-faith dialogue and full implementation of the Special Autonomy Law appears to be under pressure. Reports have circulated that the Papuan People,s Council and the Papuan provincial government will in a few weeks repudiate the Special Autonomy Law and demand a referendum on the future status of the province. These gestures would prove very provocative to the GOI, and widen the rifts that exist within SBY,s Administration on how to deal with Papua. PASCOE